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Research Dossier: Bell

Country
Canada

Company Name
Bell Mobility

Ownership Type
Subsidiary

Ownership/Controlling Entity
BCE Inc

Website
http://www.bell.ca

MNC
610
640
690
880

Company Overview

Bell Mobility is the third largest mobile carrier operating in Canada. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bell Canada, itself a subsidiary of BCE Inc (TSX, NYSE: BCE), Canada's largest telecommunications company. Bell offers services under the Bell, Bell Aliant and Bell MTS brands. These include fibre-based IPTV and the country's fastest high-speed Internet services, 4G LTE, home phone services as well as business network and communications services, including data hosting and cloud computing through the country's largest network of data centres.

Due to the large geographic area the network must cover, a mix of frequencies are in use. Bell provides 2G GSM services over 850 and 1900 MHz, and 3G UMTS also over B2 (1900 MHz) and B5 (850 MHz) bands supporting HSPA+ technology. 4G LTE was launched by the company in September 2011, over the B4 (1700 MHz), later adding B2 (1900 MHz) and B7 (2600 MHz) in March 2012, and has been expanded in partnership with TELUS Mobility.

700 MHz LTE is also deployed in partnership with TELUS over several bands depending on regional licencing including B12, B13, B17, and B29 (Supplemental DL) - noting however that B17 is a sub-band of B12 so the two are broadcast as the one transmission. B5 (850 MHz) LTE is also in use in areas where CDMA has been decommissioned and subsequently refarmed. Bell began providing fixed wireless TDD-LTE services over B42 (3500 MHz) to select areas in 2014.

June 2015 saw the launch of LTE-A services, reaching 220 Mbps peak DL rates, and tri-band LTE-A (3C) in August 2015 achieving 290 Mbps. In April 2017 Bell launched quad-band (4C) LTE-A services which it says will deliver mobile broadband speeds of up to 750 Mbps with the addition of 256QAM.

LTE-A was upgraded further in February 2018 with the addition of 4X4 MIMO to its 4C 256QAM network, boasting peak theoretical data rates in excess of 1.5 Gbps, and achieving real-world data rates over 1 Gbps. Bell also announced support for Licensed Assisted Access (LAA) technology to aggregate unlicensed 5 GHz spectrum with LTE in licensed bands to provide even higher data rates.

Bell has announced that it will deploy an eMTC (LTE Cat-M1) network in early 2018.